

# In med exercise, the lessons can be lifesavers

In Kuwait center, soldiers get most realistic training possible before going to Iraq

By Michelle Tan  
mtan@militarytimes.com

**CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait** — The sound of persistent gunfire filled the darkened tent as the soldiers rushed in, their weapons at the ready.

There were eight casualties waiting for them, each oozing blood, each needing immediate medical care.

As the soldiers rushed to apply tourniquets and bandages to the wounded, fake blood seeped across the floor, reminding them that even though this was just an exercise, the lessons they learn

could save a fellow soldier's life on the battlefield.

Here at the Medical Simulation Training Center, hundreds of soldiers go through this exercise before deploying to Iraq. The 16 mannequins available to the soldiers are no dummies — they breathe and bleed; they have a pulse; their eyes blink.

"This is as close as we can get to live tissue training without doing live tissue training," said Edward Gunter, a training facilitator at the MSTC here.

The goal of the training is to



M. SCOTT MAHASKEY/STAFF

give soldiers as much realistic and standardized training as possible before they deploy into a combat zone. While about 90 percent of the soldiers who undergo this

training are combat lifesaver qualified, participants don't have to have that certification to participate.

The four-hour training programs are so popular that troops from countries such as Great Britain, Australia, South Korea, Japan and Mongolia have done it. Soldiers who trained at the MSTC here have written to the instructors about how the training has helped them, and to ask what could be done to provide more real-life lessons.

The MSTC here has been in place since early 2006. It began in a single classroom, and has now grown into two classrooms with eight mannequins in each classroom. The life-sized mannequins cost about \$40,000 each.

Three smaller MSTCs have opened in Afghanistan — at Camp Phoenix, Forward Operating Base Salerno and Bagram Air Base — and one at Balad Air Base in Iraq.

The training centers in Afghanistan also provide mobile training teams, and instructors also conduct other types of medical training, including the combat lifesaver course.

Soldiers who go through the training focus on everything from massive bleeding and circulation to head injuries and hypothermia.

"If I could give every soldier one pertinent skill, [it would be] the proper way to administer a tourniquet," Gunter said. "The most critical area is stopping the bleeding."

During each session, students spend about an hour listening to a lecture and about three hours par-

**Soldiers train to give medical aid using a mannequin at the Medical Simulation Training Center on Sept. 10 at Camp Buehring in Kuwait.**

ticipating in hands-on scenarios.

The MSTC here can train up to 160 soldiers a day. During the surge of five Army brigade combat teams to Iraq in 2007, more than 1,000 soldiers a week went through the training.

The instructors — some of them from the Army, others civilian contractors — are always listening to what soldiers in the field tell them, said Raymond Pavlosky from the Army Training Support Center.

For example, in the next three to six months, the MSTC hopes to add animal mannequins so soldiers can learn how to provide medical care to military working dogs.

On Sept. 10, soldiers from the New Jersey National Guard's B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery Regiment, faced simulated sounds from combat, including gunfire and screaming, as they rushed to care for the bleeding mannequins.

A 1,000-gallon water tank and some red dye help ensure the mannequins never run out of blood.

Spc. Joshua Greulich, 22, who completed the combat lifesaver course in August, said the training gave him more hands-on time to keep his skills fresh.

"I didn't expect [the mannequin] to bleed and breathe," he said. "It's kind of eerie to see that thing blink." □

**1948:**

American servicemen and their allies saved more than 2 million people in the city of Berlin with the Airlift. A friendship is reborn.

**Today:**

More than 15 million Americans have lived in Germany while they or their family members served in the U.S. military. The friendship endures.



Airlift Hero Gail Halvorsen, The Berlin "Candy Bomber"



**Friends Always**

The Airlift - A Legacy of Friendship

Stay in touch with friends at [www.Germany.info](http://www.Germany.info)